

Seattle School Board Approves New Nutrition-Related Policies

The Seattle School Board has unanimously approved a comprehensive and far-reaching set of nutrition-related policies designed to provide students with healthy food and beverage choices during the school day. Specifically, the policies will **ban sales of all foods containing high levels of sugar and fat, improve the quality and appeal of school meal programs, and prohibit contracts with beverage vendors for "exclusive pouring rights."** These policies are amongst the strongest in the country, and confirm the Board's commitment to eliminating barriers to learning by creating a healthy nutrition environment in all 100 schools. "These policies make it clear that we are determined to provide our students with healthy food options," said School Board Vice-President Brita Butler-Wall. "We are committed to providing an environment at each school that maximizes students' ability to learn and succeed. That includes ensuring that foods and beverages sold at schools are healthy and nutritious."

The new policies require all foods and beverages sold and distributed during the school day to meet nutrition guidelines and follow certain portion sizes. This provision will go into effect immediately at elementary and middle schools, and beginning February 1, 2005 at high schools. Exclusive 'pouring rights' contracts will be prohibited, and the current exclusive contract with Coca-Cola will be phased out within one year. The policies also give direction to the school meal program and others to offer fresh, local, organic, non-genetically-modified, non-irradiated, unprocessed food, whenever feasible. Butler-Wall praised Shelley Curtis, Nutrition Director for the Children's Alliance, for leading the research team that developed the policies over a six-month period. The nutrition sub-committee of the School Board relied on the expertise of more than 60 health and nutrition experts and community members. In adopting these policies, Seattle leads the way on a new state law requiring districts to adopt nutrition policies by 2005.

The new and amended policies include: Policy E11.00, Food Service, and Procedure E11.01, Breakfast and Lunch Program Policy E13.00, Food Sales, and Procedure E13.01, Distribution and Sales of Competitive Foods Procedure C30.01, Advertising and Commercial Activities The report of the nutrition committee is available on the District's Web site at <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/board/committees.xml> and School Board Policies are available at <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/policies/index.dxml>